



## **SAVING REEFS WORLDWIDE THROUGH EDUCATION, RESEARCH & CONSERVATION**

May 19, 2005

Mr. Jim Kellogg, President  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Mr. Phil Isenberg, Chair  
MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Citizen reef monitoring and enforcement, Reef Check California**

Dear President Kellogg, Chairman Isenberg, Commission and Task Force Members:

Effective monitoring and enforcement, as well as a strong marine conservation constituency, are critical to the success of the MLPA initiative and long-term success of marine reserves along California's coast. Unfortunately, as the Commission and Task Force are well aware, there is a distinct paucity of resources to thoroughly monitor and effectively enforce existing and possible new marine reserves. Reef Check California, a new initiative recently launched by The Reef Check Foundation, is developing a scientific monitoring program that will involve members of the public led by qualified marine biologists. The Reef Check California program will fill many gaps in the existing monitoring network, help build a local marine conservation constituency and aid enforcement efforts. While the ultimate goal is to create a statewide program, the initial stages will focus on central and southern California.

Founded in 1996, The Reef Check Foundation runs the world's largest marine monitoring program and works with communities, governments and businesses to scientifically monitor, restore and maintain coral reefs globally. Currently active in over 80 countries and territories throughout the world, Reef Check continues to demonstrate that community stewardship is often the most effective tool to monitor marine ecosystems and enforce Marine Protected Areas. The goal of Reef Check California is to transfer this well-tested model of community monitoring and stewardship from warm to temperate/cold water ecosystems, while ensuring that the new program meets rigorous scientific standards.

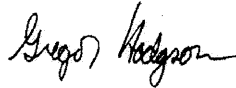
To most effectively achieve this goal, we ask for your support and guidance as we develop the monitoring protocol and reach out to all constituents in the central and south coast region. We aim to work closely with Fish and Game staff, MLPA Initiative staff, and academic researchers as well as the fishing, diving and environmental communities while we develop the monitoring protocol, training and testing materials during the summer and fall of 2005. Our goal is to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop a scientifically valid protocol that can be accurately completed by trained volunteers. It is our experience that community volunteers often gain a significant sense of stewardship by participating in surveys and thus become de facto "eyes on the reef" to assist with detection and enforcement efforts.

With your help and support, we believe that Reef Check California can bring all ocean users together under a single cause to create a network of citizen volunteers equipped with the training, the tools and the incentive to assist with data collection and enforcement to help manage our precious coastal marine resources.

Thank you,



Craig Shuman, D. Env.  
Director  
Reef Check California



Gregor Hodgson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Reef Check Foundation